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Community Reception Honors Freyermuth

By MEG LITTLEPAGE

Over 100 people, undeterred by a 6-inch snowfall, navigated their way through a magical snowscape to the student lounge at DJSHS on Jan. 10 to honor Virginia Freyermuth, 1995 Visual Art Educator of the Year.

Community members, students, faculty, administrators, friends, and relatives were greeted by sounds of the DJSHS Chamber Orchestra and the awe inspiring sight of framed works and 3-D cardboard sculptures of animals, a hot air balloon, and a helicopter that made the student lounge look more like an art gallery than a school room.

Well-wishers were able to greet Mrs. Freyermuth, to enjoy refreshments while socializing, to sign an art smock, to view photos of Virginia copied from her DHS yearbook, and to pick up some momentos donated by the Disney Channel.

Presentations began around 7:45 with M.C., Dave Tenney introducing each presenter and filling in for those unable to attend. Pam Sullivan from Walt Disney sent congratulations and 12 long-stemmed red roses, but was snowed in in NYC. Commissioner of Education, Robert Antonucci sent video taped greetings and Fran Marini sent a citation from the state presented by his assistant, Colleen O'Connor. The town of Duxbury also presented Mrs. Freyermuth a citation for Outstanding Accomplishment and Service.

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Following these formal recognitions, Emily Reed, Art Club president, spoke about the impact Mrs. Freyermuth has on her students by sharing her own development as an artist under Mrs. Freyermuth's tutelage, saying she teaches us to respect others, our self, and our own work. "She allowed me to find out who I was through my artwork." Following this tribute, she presented Mrs. Freyermuth with an embossed scrapbook filled with art work and letters from well wishers.

Bruce Hamilton, Carl Meier, Caro Peterson, and Mike Burke spoke for the faculty praising Mrs. Freyermuth for being a "team player," always bringing back new ideas to share with peers and students. "Peer Praise" was an idea that caught on. Teachers built on this idea by presenting her an enlarged form full of peer praise and a list of peer praise from the faculty that attendees could add to. Wayne Ogden also spoke briefly about Virginia's recognition, and what it meant to the school community.

Mary Ann MacIntosh and the Art Department teachers brought tears to Mrs. Freyermuth's eyes as they described her as an inspiration, mentor, friend, and colleague, and presented, in a miniature apple box, a ring designed by the art department and fabricated by fellow art teacher, Rose Kowalski.

When Mrs. Freyermuth came to the microphone amid loud applause, she turned the event around by announcing that she viewed the evening as a celebration of everyone there, the school, the town, all teachers, and

most of all her students.

After saying that "teaching really is a full time profession," she first recognized her family for their support, presenting flowers to both her mother, Pauline Pyle, and mother-in-law, Mrs. Frederick Freyermuth, and hugging her 2 children and husband.

Not one to forget kindnesses done, Freyermuth thanked all those who wrote speech and nomination papers for her, including the first recognitions that sent her on the path to being named Visual Arts Educator of 1995.

She also remembered those who believed in her, citing family, friends, high school art teachers, her peers at DJSHS who inspire her to do her best; Jack Hill, her principal in high school and the one who charged her with making "Duxbury High School's art department the best it could be."

She specifically thanked the art department and substitutes for their support during her busy years of public appearances and for their continued dedication to the art program and their students.

Mrs. Freyermuth went on to recall the years when tight budgets almost ended her career until the community rallied and saved the arts and the seven period day. She praised parents and community members who attend meetings and stay involved in the school for giving the support that keeps and renews an excellent, caring faculty.

She continued by thanking the committee organizers, Dave Tenney, Mary Ann MacIntosh, Meg Littlepage, Kris Gaskins, Mary Steinke, Linda Glynn, Allison Cowen, Lanci Valentine, Tris Nuland, Denise Loverso, and Emily Reed for spotlighting the incredible work of Duxbury students at the evening of celebration of excellence.

Saving a surprise to close her speech, Mrs. Freyermuth announced that DJSHS will offer a new Art History course beginning next fall - something the school has wanted to do, according to Wayne Ogden, for some time, but lacked funds to purchase art slides. The Walt Disney award of \$2,500 to Virginia Freyermuth's school will cover those costs. Thank you, Virginia!

Reception for Virginia Freyermuth



Virginia Freyermuth with her husband Richard, son Jeffrey, and daughter Julie.



Jim Vinci leads the DHS String Ensemble that played throughout the evening.

Photos by
Deni Johnson



Principal Wayne Ogden stands in front of some of the wonderful artwork that decorated the reception.



Virginia's mother Pauline Pyle and her sister Susan Dahlen proudly listen to the speakers.



Artist Maria Wilhelm and committee member Mary Steinke.



Dr. Jack Hill was both Virginia's principal and her boss during his years at DHS. Dr. John Sullivan is a member of the faculty.



School committee members Linda Smith and Carol Love.



School committee member David Tenney congratulates Virginia.



Linda Klein helps Michael Burke with the list of "Peer Praises" to be framed as a gift for Virginia.



Jane Potkin, Chris Gaskins, and Meg Littlepage were 3 of the many people that organized and ran the "Freyermuth Recognition Committee."



Students of Virginia's that shared in the evening by decorating the room were (l-r) Maria Webster, Todd McGarvey, Lillian Webster, Jessica Bell, James Cerne, and Sarah Lleyveld.